

**CLAIMS:**

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method for central storage and retrieval of user passwords in a computer network, comprising:
- entering network user ID and password information into a central database;
  - registering network applications and their
  - 10 associated passwords with a LDAP server;
  - receiving user ID and password data from an application login;
  - identifying the registered application and sending the user ID and password to the LDAP server;
  - 15 retrieving the application's associated password;
  - authenticating the user password;
  - sending a response from the LDAP server back to the application; and
  - granting access to the application only if the
  - 20 authentication is verified.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of receiving a user ID and password from an application login further comprises:
- 25 encrypting the user ID and password and sending them to a secure layer before the application is identified;
  - and
  - decrypting the user password in the LDAP server before retrieving the application's password.
  - 30
3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising, if authentication is not verified, allowing the user to

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submit a new user ID and password.

4. The method according to claim 1, further comprising setting one password attribute, wherein the value of the password attribute is set to a referral object where all passwords and associated applications for the user are stored.
5. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:  
storing the application password as a multiple-value attribute; and  
comparing the password provided by the user against all passwords to determine the right to access the desired application.
6. The method according to claim 1, further comprising using a single LDAP command to modify and manage all of a network user's accounts.
7. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for use in a data processing system, for central storage and retrieval of user passwords in a computer network, the computer program product comprising:  
instructions for entering network user ID and password information into a central database;  
instructions for registering network applications and their associated passwords with a LDAP server;  
instructions for receiving user ID and password data from an application login;  
instructions for identifying the registered application and sending the user ID and password to the LDAP server;

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instructions for retrieving the application's  
associated password;

instructions for authenticating the user password;

instructions for sending a response from the LDAP

5 server back to the application; and

instructions for granting access to the application  
only if the authentication is verified.

8. The computer program product according to claim 7,  
10 wherein the instructions for receiving a user ID and  
password from an application login further comprises:

instructions for encrypting the user ID and password  
and sending them to a secure layer before the application  
is identified; and

15 instructions for decrypting the user password in the  
LDAP server before retrieving the application's password.

9. The computer program product according to claim 7,  
further comprising, if authentication is not verified,  
20 instructions for allowing the user to submit a new user  
ID and password.

10. The computer program product according to claim 7,  
further comprising instructions for setting one password  
25 attribute, wherein the value of the password attribute is  
set to a referral object where all passwords and  
associated applications for the user are stored.

11. The computer program product according to claim 7,  
30 further comprising:

instructions for storing the application password as  
a multiple-value attribute; and

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instructions for comparing the password provided by the user against all passwords to determine the right to access the desired application.

5 12. The computer program product according to claim 7, further comprising instructions for using a single LDAP command to modify and manage all of a network user's accounts.

10 13. A system for central storage and retrieval of user passwords in a computer network, comprising:

means for entering network user ID and password information into a central database;

15 means for registering network applications and their associated passwords with a LDAP server;

means for receiving user ID and password data from an application login;

means for identifying the registered application and sending the user ID and password to the LDAP server;

20 means for retrieving the application's associated password;

means for authenticating the user password;

means for sending a response from the LDAP server back to the application; and

25 means for granting access to the application only if the authentication is verified.

14. The system according to claim 13, wherein the means for receiving a user ID and password from an application login further comprises:

30 means for encrypting the user ID and password and sending them to a secure layer before the application is

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identified; and

means for decrypting the user password in the LDAP server before retrieving the application's password.

5 15. The system according to claim 13, further comprising, if authentication is not verified, means for allowing the user to submit a new user ID and password.

10 16. The system according to claim 13, further comprising means for setting one password attribute, wherein the value of the password attribute is set to a referral object where all passwords and associated applications for the user are stored.

15 17. The system according to claim 13, further comprising:

means for storing the application password as a multiple-value attribute; and

20 means for comparing the password provided by the user against all passwords to determine the right to access the desired application.

25 18. The system according to claim 13, further comprising means for using a single LDAP command to modify and manage all of a network user's accounts.